

A N
Impartial *Examination*
O F
NATHANIEL FLECHER'S
PAMPHLET:
ENTITLED, The
Methodist dissected.

Written by a FRIEND; and publish'd by JOHN
WALTON, *Layman*, in *Halifax*, YORKSHIRE.



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To the READER.

*M*Y Design was to have written my Thoughts, upon John Sladdin's Description of the METHODISTS, &c. and Nath. Fletcher's, METHODIST dissected, &c. but lately receiving a Letter, from a Friend, and with it, what he calls a Preface, and an Examination of Fletcher, &c. with Permission also, either to publish them, or to make any other use of them in my present Design, I have chose to do the former: I have publish'd them both, in His own Words, and prefixed His Letter thereto, being every way suitable, to my own Sentiments, and firmly believing His answer to Fletcher's 13 Errors of the METHODISTS, to be agreeable to the Form of Sound Words, and the clear Testimony of Holy Scripture. His cursory mention of Sladdin's Performance, and his Reason for it, I think, are sufficient to apologize for the Want of a larger and more circumstantial Reply.

John Walton.

Honest FRIEND,

BEING informed, that you intend to answer John Sladdin's brief Description of the METHODISTS, &c. and Nath. Fletcher's METHODIST dissected, &c. if your Publication of the Preface herewith sent, together with the Examination of the latter of those impertinent Pamphlets; and the small, but sufficient, mention therein made of the former, will save you the Trouble, or be of any Service to your Design, I make you very welcome to them.

Fletcher's Performance, I dare say, may make, but can never mar METHODISTS. The Sequel will shew what may convince you of this; and Sladdin is so full of Malice and Virulence, that, I am perswaded, every serious Searcher after Truth and Happiness will never allow His Judgement to be formed thereby.

I am,

Your sincere,

and very respectful

Friend, &c.

The P R E F A C E.

I A M a Man, if my Name be worth enquiring after, and I may describe myself, who entertain an universal, cordial, Love for the Souls of all Men, believing the same to be in G O D, otherwise it could not be in me; but in H I M in an infinite Degree. And therefore it will be easily perceived that I embrace the Universal Scheme, or believe, that God out of this Principle of divine Love sent His only begotten Son into the World to redeem all Mankind.

And as I love all Men's Souls, so I hate all Mens Sins, especially my own; believing the Guilty, so dying, *shall never enter into the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. v. 19, 20. 21. But then I must tell you withal, that, 'till of late, I did not take many Things to be Sin, which are so. I only gave grosser Vices this Denomination; thinking Pastimes, Diversions, and Pleasures to be *innocent Recreations*. — *Playing at Cards and Dice, Singing, Whistling, Jesting or Joking*, I look'd upon to be harmless and inoffensive both before God and Man. The *Clergy, Justices of Peace, &c* by their Use of them, I had all the Reason imaginable to suppose, think so too.

And particularly as to my own Life; God and my Neighbours very well know, for to both, thought I, I can safely appeal, that from my Youth up until now I have lived a strictly religious, virtuous, sober, irreprovable Life, admitting only the Enjoyment of the aforesaid Diversions, &c. and as to my Profession a strict Church of England Man, and my Opinion always was, that if I held on my Course to the End, I should then be justify'd and saved. Conscious, I must confess, I all along was, and am, that I have committed several great Sins; yet, thought I, all is well still—who can live without Sin?—God is not extream to mark what is done amiss. — He is merciful. — Moreover, for the Main, I am an upright Man, and wherein I chance to err, which, God I thank thee, is but seldom, CHRIST with H I S Merits will make out, — **For** he came to save even the Chief of Sinners: And therefore he will surely help me in that little Matter that I may need H I M for. — And one Thing yet again, with the *ninety nine just Persons that need no Repentance*, I strenuously labour to live as Holy as ever I can, that I, not only may need this JESUS the less, who *came not to call the Righteous but Sinners to Repentance*; and to be a Physician not to the Whole, for H E says H I M S E L F, *they need none, but to the Sick*, Matt. ix. 12, 13 —

but also that I may please God so much the better, and at the End be so much the happier.—Thus I conceived of my Virtue.

I was likewise all for my own *Way*, all for my own *Sort*, and a Zealot for my own *Church*, concluding all to be in a dangerous or a damnable Condition that differed from the established Church, even in Form and Mode. I made almost as small Account of a *Dissenting Meeting House*, as of a *Jewish Synagogue*, a *Turkish Mosque*, or a *Heathen Temple*, and I esteemed of their Religious Worship, as little better than *theirs*.—and therefore I could never endure to go at any Time into them.

And since these *Methodists* started up, I could never, 'till of late, be prevailed with to go to hear them. For I thought with *Nath Fletcher* in his Preface, and I perceived the Generality of my Neighbours thought the same; “that though they have by their Labour been instrumental to civilize some of the rakish Sort of People: yet this doth not tolerate them to preach false Doctrine, since they may as soon do as much Hurt the one Way, as they do Good the other.” And this I was the more inclined to think by Reason of the many strange Stories I heard of their many *quaint Expressions*, *unorthodox Notions*, and *rambling, incoherent Harangues* from various sensible Men, who out of Curiosity had been to hear these *Newfashioned Preachers*. By this Means I was determined, not only for some Years never to hear them; but withal was continually impregnated with a growing Prejudice, Antipathy and Malice against them, vilifying and reproaching them and their Doctrines *Hand over Head* in all Company, where mention was made of them, as if I had been never so well acquainted with them. I look'd upon them to be an ignorant, irregular, enthusiastical, schismatical People, and dangerous Enemies to both *Church* and *State*; and this the rather, because such like appeared up and down in the Land in the *late Civil War Time*, who to this Day are represented as the Fomenters of those Troubles.

I observed, as aforesaid, the Generality of my Neighbours to be in my way of thinking; and those of all Professions, as well Presbyterians, Baptists and Quakers, as Churchmen, however different in other Matters, were all agreed in the same Male-Conceptions of the *Methodists*. This Observation confirm'd me still more, as any one may readily imagine, in my Prejudice against them.

Amidst all this I have a Neighbour, you must know, a Man allowed by every Body to be a Person of good Sense and solid Judgment, and One as much averse as myself to the Principles
and

and Proceedings of these *Methodists*, equally bent too, as I, against all Inclinations to hear them. This Man going one Day about Business to a certain House, where there was to be preaching, and casually dropping in a few Minutes before it began, could not decently excuse himself and get away. I have heard him tell, but cannot now recollect certainly the Preacher's Name; but think it was *Nelson the Mason of Birstall*, or one of the *Tinners of Cornwall*, who are *Preachers in Mr. Wesley's Connection*;—However, what Decency compell'd him to, Curiosity inclined him to, tho' fill'd, as I have since heard him say, with the rankest Prepossession and Prejudice that could be. He told me, I think, also, what his Text was;—Which, to the best of my Remembrance, was Mar. 10th Chapter and the seven last Verses, concerning the curing of blind Bartimeus, the Son of Timeus. However the Preacher, he told me, managed the Subject, with such Energy, Plainness and Perspicuity, and advanced such Plenty of edifying Matter from each Clause of the Text, and the same had such an apparent Influence and deep Impression upon the Audience, that these Observations, together with the Consideration of the Man's Illiterateness and Simplicity overcame his Prejudice so far, as to persuade him, that surely the Power of God must be with Him.

He comes his Way to me immediately, tells me this strange Story, and loudly condemns himself for his former Prejudice, grievously complaining how disingenuously he had hitherto acted against these Men, and his own Soul, in giving Ear so long to the false Stories related by others against them. "O, says he, "wou'd to God I always had, and wou'd to God others always "wou'd, hear for themselves, and be their own Judges!—I am "resolved to hear them again" At these Words, laughing him to scorn, What, says I, are You going *Mad too*? Are You turning *Methodist*?—What! A sensible Man, wellbeloved among your Neighbours, and make this shabby Hand of it!—For Shame let me hear no more of it.—However, He gravely reply'd, "That he did believe these People had the Truth of the "Gospel on their Side; that to be in the true Way that leadeth "to everlasting Life was a Matter of the highest Concern; and "that whatever Men might be pleased to say or think of Him, "His precious Soul was dearer to him than a thousand Worlds "and all the Glories of them, and therefore whatever I or any "Man might say against Him, He was resolved to go hear the "*Methodists* again;" and at parting said to me,— "pray, will "You go with me?"—Will I be d—d, said I.—Don't You

You hear what an odious Outcry there is against them, not only from our Gentry, Tradesmen and Lay-Neighbours, but also from several of our Parsons, yea, and Presbyterians Priests too, in their Pulpits, Sunday after Sunday. Surely as these are Men of great Piety, and Learning, they are like to know best. Would such good Men preach so bitterly, and warn us so earnestly against the *Methodists*, and their Doctrines, as they do; if it were not next Degree to our utter Damnation to go hear them? — How many excellent Sermons have not these Dear Men, *who You know, watch over our Souls*, in the Apostle's Words, *as they that must give an Account*, Heb. 13. 17. preach'd to us within these two or three Years from *Ephes* 4. 14. *2 Tim.* iii. 1, 7. *Ch.* iv. 3. 4. *Tit.* i. 10. 11. and from *Jude's Epistle*? — Don't those Texts literally and plainly describe the present Conduct and Behaviour of these Men? — Don't they creep into Houses or Barnes, &c. Don't they *lead captive silly women, laden with sins, and lead away with divers lusts, and that for filthy lucre's Sake* (witness their Penny Pensions) as we are credibly inform'd? — Nay, are we not assured, that the very Presbyterian Parsons, as much as they may dissent from us on other Accounts join freely with Ours in suppressing this *New Set*, that, You know, *is every where spoke against*? Inasmuch that I am apt to forebode from this Concurrence between them a double good Effect, viz. the Extinguishing of *Methodism* and cementing an Union between us. Nay is it not observable that in this Neighbourhood they meet together and confer together frequently, and some of both Sorts preach so much to the same Purpose on Sundays, that one wou'd be almost induced to think they either conferr'd or composed their Notes together too? — Some of them are so sensible of the growing Evil and are so zealous to stop it, that they in a great Measure throw a side all other Subjects to preach down *Methodism*, and to clear it thoroughly out of Our Hearts and Heads and Country too, as quickly as they can, — Nay are not some of the Presbyterian Parsons, supposed, to their Praise be it spoken, *to play the Jesuit*, in opposing *Lay preaching* by *Lay printing* and artfully fixing poor Sladdin's Name to one of their ingenious Pamphlets? — Was not this prettily done of them? and don't You hear what a Stand in some odd Places this Device has put to *Methodism*? — Nay yet again, as a still greater needs be, of their Care and Assiduity to prevent our being seduced and destroy'd by these false Teachers and their Doctrines, are they not fain, says I, to alledge the Objections, not only of the Worldly Tradesmen, and Gentlemen of Gaiety and Pleasure, whom I mult

own,

own, I always think, are Men in general of very little Religion, but also, of the very Vulgar and Vicious?—Don't You hear, say they, what *Drunken John*, *Swearing Tom*, and *whoring James* have to say against these *Methodists*?—And is it not, by the bye, herein observable, that they even look upon *Methodism* to be more ignominious than Swearing, Drunkenness or Whoredom? This brought into my Mind, and caused me to tell Him what a certain Divine of our Church, and one as industrious, nay more so perhaps, than any other, in all England to extirpate *this Heresy*, and not long ago confidently affirm'd to me, "That it was a less sin to spend an Evening at Cards, than at a *Methodist Meeting*."—All this and much more, I said to reclaim my Friend.—For a while He was silent; At last; says He, I really know not how it is.—In the Beginning of His preaching I felt as strong an Aversion to the Man and his Words, as you may have now, but afterwards my Mind was so effected with the the Remainder of his Discourse, and has remain'd so uneasy ever since, that I must needs go hear them again, That's the Case now says I.—You are going mad, like the rest of them.—Did not a certain Presbyterian Parson, a while ago tell his Hearers, "That they drive Folkes mad?"—This is also another Mischief our Teachers labour diligently to prevent.—I pray GOD help you.

But I tell you, continues He, what this Preacher bid his Hearers do further.—He bid them read the Scriptures diligently.—What of that, said I, interrupting him, Don't our Church Ministers do so too?—But proceeds he, he exhorted them earnestly to pray to GOD to send HIS HOLY SPIRIT into their Hearts to enlighten their Understanding.—Yes, I said, with *His common Influence*,—Nay, says He,—but to reveal and teach the true Meaning of them to us,—Yes, replied I, that's their Way too.—They are all for their *Indwellings*, *Illuminations*, *Inspirations*, *Effusions*, Inward Teachings, &c. of the HOLY GHOST, —but have not our Spiritual Guides,—told us over and over that this is mere Euthusiasm?—and that no such Revelations ever were vouchsafed to Men, since the first Ages of the Church, and that the Holy Scriptures being now in Print and every Body's Hands a Man's Reason and Understanding is sufficient to interpret their Sense to us?—Is not this very Reasonable?—To me it is, and, I dare say to most Men, even yourself excepted,—I own it he answered,—but am now inclined to think, that 'tis much more agreeable to Reason, that the same Divine SPIRIT, WHO gave the Holy Scriptures by *Inspiration*, should

shou'd teach them by *Inspiration* : Or that HE, THAT gave them to be *written*, must write them in Our Hearts.

I must also, proceeded He, in the next Words, observe another Thing unto You, which I must say, I liked very well in this *Methodist Preacher*. In his Sermon he frequently quoted our Homilies and 39 Articles, and at the End He exhorted them next after the Holy Scriptures to read them, if they were Churchmen ; or the Greater and Lesser Assemblies Catechism, if some were Presbyterians, asserting that the *Methodistical Doctrines* were in Substance the same. This I thought shew'd he was well affected to our Church, and that those People in Consequence, so long as they proceed upon that *Plan*, can, as you know, we have frequently feared, be no *Schismatics from Her*. I reply'd : You are mistaken in this Matter. I own they have often these Homilies and Articles in their Mouths,—as also those Dissenting Catechisms ; but who among our Clergy have ought that is good to say of them ? *Grimshaw of Harworth, answers He*, and is not *He a Clergyman ?* A Clergyman ! A *Methodist, a Quaker, a notorious Enemy to the Church of England*, said I.—But surely they can be no great Enemies to Her, who industriously plead for and maintain the Doctrines contained in those two Books, since they were drawn up and composed by our illustrious Founders ; neither ought those, that I can see, be accounted Adversaries to the *Presbyterian* Constitution, who strenuously contend for that excellent *Catechism*, which was composed by the worthy Assembly of Divines for the Basis of their Church.—I answered ; we are very well informed that our Homilies and 39 Articles are a *Hodge Podge of Lutheran and Calvinistical Doctrines*. *Luther and Calvin* were Men of no great Learning, and the *Compilers* of our *Church Liturgy* were more eminent for *Piety* than *Parts*, and therefore our *Modern Divines*, having better studied the Truths of Religion, are in general of Opinion, that tho' the Intention of those ancient Friends of the *Reformation* and *Founders of our Church* was good ; yet several of their Doctrines are unorthodox, and tend rather to encourage odd Notions, confused Sentiments, and downright *Euthusiasm* :—And therefore some think, 'tis by no Means adviseable to read them, especially in these *mad spirited giddy headed Times*.—One cries to his Substitute, “ Read not the Homilies, lest every Body turn *Methodists* ?—Another ;—“ I wou'd they were burnt, for they make all this Mischief :—“ Another, not laying to Heart the perjury his *Churchwarden* are annually guilty of at the *Visitation* in Swearing that they have a *Book of Homilies*, takes a pleasure in telling that he has

"none in his Church."—And the Generality of them can by no Means endure to read them, because they hold forth the *Free Grace* and not the *Free Will Scheme*, which with *SOCINUS*, *ARMINIUS*, and other *learned Doctors*, judge now a *Days* best—*This do and live*, *Luke* 10. 28. is, they think, a much surer Way to Heaven than *Believe in the Lord JESUS*, and *thou shalt be saved*, *Acts* 16. 31. And, pray, does not our Reason tell us that this is the more likely Way to be saved?—What great Cause have we then to bless GOD, that notwithstanding the Opposition *Methodism* may have made, the *Free Will Scheme* has gain'd *Wonderful Ground* of *late Years* in our *Nation*. The *Presbyterian Divines* also give ours the right Hand of Fellowship in carrying on this laudible Design, exploding their Catechism, as a mere humane Composition, and preaching up *freewill* and *Justification by good Works* out of the *New Testament*—You may plainly see from these Hints how dangerous it is to close with the *Methodists*, even on this Account, I wish you had gone twenty Miles another Way about your Business rather than where you did to Day,—Perhaps, says He gravely, it was the LORD's Will,—The LORD's Will; the D-ls Will, replied I—Well, be that as it will, said he; I am determin'd to hear them again, and shou'd be glad of your Company.—And thus we parted.

Being alone, reflecting upon what my Neighbour had said observing him all along to be very grave and serious about the Matter and knowing him to be allow'd by all Folks to be a Man of good Sense, solid Judgment and Piety, and aforesaid as averse as any one to the *Methodists*, I came to this Resolution with Myself, that if he shou'd ever ask me again to go hear them, I wou'd. In the *Dusk* of an Evening, a little while after, passing by me, as I stood at my Door, to a preaching, says he, will you go with me?—Yes, says I, what care I, if I do; once cannot hurt me; So away we went together: Soon after we got to the Place, the Preacher began, and having first gone to Prayer and then sung a Hymn, he preach'd from *Jo.* 3. 16. and proceeded in this Manner—1st.—He harangued upon the Love of GOD to the World, what it was.—2dly.—How he express'd this Love to the World, viz. by giving HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON—And here shew'd WHO HE was, and how HE was given by the FATHER. —3dly.—Why HE was given; or what We receive from HIM, through HIM, viz. Everlasting Life.—4thly.—And lastly—How We receive this Gift, and that was by Believing.—These four Propositions he made so plainly and clearly Out, that I most

own I went Home very much amazed, tho' not much convinced. What increased my Admiration was, that tho' he manifestly appear'd to be a Man of no Learning, yet every Thing was clear'd up and set forth with as much *Perspicuity*, as if he had been the *ablest Scholar*.—This disposed me to be a little more of my Neighbour's Mind.—And I have gone some Times to hear them since, as also the *Brethren* and *Mr. Ingham*.—Much of my Prejudice is still remaining,—I am neither easy under it, nor willing to part with it; one while I think to stick to my Church; another while to cleave to the *Methodists*.—My whole Mind is unhinged—I read as well, as hear *Pro* and *Con*, but nothing is so much my Desire as to meet with any Thing that helps to settle me in my easy, *Old Way*, and to confirm me in my Prejudice against these People.—I believe I have read most Things that have hitherto been publish'd against them—The *Pamphlet*, that goes under the Name of *Sladdin's Brief Description of the Methodists, &c.* tho' for some very good Reasons, *not believed* by the Generality of People to be writ by him, but as has been afore hinted, by some *Presbyterian Priests*, I have also read over—But such a Spirit of Prejudice, Ill Nature and Railery I observed to run through it, that I could scarcely think that the Author who ever he be, had the Spirit of a Christian in Him, and therefore though I felt the Matter had a strong Tendency in it to exasperate my Prejudice, I could by no means think it adviseable to admit such *Ribaldry* to settle me in it, wherefore no sooner had I read it, than I threw it aside, as not deserving my Notice.

Since this last, there fell lately into my Hand another *Pamphlet*, entitled the *Methodist dissected or a Description of their Errors*, by *Nath. Fletcher, Layman*.—This Book by its Title, I thought, bid fair for my Purpose,—I therefore set to and read it, promising myself from it all the Satisfaction I wanted—The Preface still fill'd me with greater Expectations; surely thought I, this *Dissection of a Methodist* will cure me of my Frenzy, and reduce me to my former Peace of Mind—When I came to these Words — “ *I heartily wish, says He, that those Persons, to whom I've recommended my Book, would better examine the Doctrine they have been deceived with, and try it impartially by the New Testament.* ” This, thought I, is a very reasonable Request and the surest Way to make me easy; The Scriptures are a perfect Rule of Faith—If the *Errors* he charges the *Methodists* be thereby confuted, I shall have all I can desire, for my Purpose—I therefore resolved to take the Author's Advice and to examine the *Errors*, He mentions, as a Part only, yet the Grosslest of those

"those, that the *Methodists* are guilty of, by the *New Testament*." This I have done in what ——— But to a quite contrary End than I at the Beginning either expected or desired. For instead of an old, formal, prejudiced *Churchman*, my Examination has obliged me to become a *steady, true Methodist*, or which is the very same Thing, a *sound Christian*, and a *true Church of England Man*. Inasmuch that I am persuaded, that whoever will but do as I have done, I mean, take the Advice of this Author, "to try the *Methodistical Doctrines* by the *New Testament*," will thereby be resolved to turn *Methodist* too, and will think himself bound to thank both God and Him for his Counsel, and to pray Night and Day that He may practice it Himself and turn *Christian* also.

The End of the Preface.



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The Examination

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The EXAMINATION, &c.

I Begin with the Introduction, and intend to examine both it and the Errors of the *Methodists*, which he makes thirteen in Number, in the following Manner.

The Methodists, says He, are of so many Sorts, 'tis almost impossible to mention them all — Some are call'd Inghamites, some Moravians, and some Wesleyans. — Some hold one Sort of Principles and some another, &c.

I have attentively heard all three, and examined their *Doctrines* and *Principles* as carefully as I can, and therefore am able to say, that what Difference may be between them, is more about some Opinions than Principles. — In the Main they are nearly one. — Their *Doctrines* are in Substance briefly these, — That Man is a *lost Creature*, born in *original Corruption and Sin*, and laden with innumerable *Transgressions* against every Precept in the Decalogue, as well in Thought, as Word and Work; that the least as well as the greatest deserves eternal Damnation; that a deep, compunctive Sense of Guilt for Sin of every Sort, as well inward as outward, aggravated by a horrid Dread of God's Wrath, the Curse and Condemnation of the Law is indispensibly needful and previous to Conversion, or which is all one Justification (or Remission of Sins) and Sanctification; that this Justification is obtained by such Penitents through Faith only in the Blood and Righteousness of Our Saviour CHRIST; that this is an instantaneous Work of the HOLY GHOST; that the Love of GOD is then also shed abroad in our Hearts, begetting in us a reciprocal Love towards God again, and to all Mankind, and universal Holiness of Heart and Life call'd Sanctification. These are the Bulk of what they all agree in, maintain and preach.

— And a great Part of the illeterate Sort of them know not what they hold, being ignorant of all rational Principles, &c.

This, I have good Reason to believe, is not true; For the few Times I have gone to hear them, I have always observed that their *Lay-Preachers* are as clear and consistent with themselves, as others, in the aforesaid *Doctrines*.

They

— *They can scarce read a Chapter in the Bible, or write one Page of true English.*

The former of these Objections is notoriously false; the latter is no absolute Impediment, as I think, to a Gospel Preacher.— 'Tis hard to prove whether some of the Apostles were better qualified in this Respect.

— *How they come to bear the Name of Methodists is hard to determine; — but I think, says He, the Truth of the Matter is, they affecting Singularity, would choose a Method of their own; and therefore have given themselves that Name.*

This Name, I have been very well inform'd, these People neither invented, nor affect; but received it, and bear it, as a Term of Reproach, cast on them at first by a Student of Christ Church in Oxford.

— *In General, in the last Place, says He, they are made up of the ignorant Part of Mankind, &c.*

This is really trifling, and mere silly weak Stuff; when we find that the Disciples and Multitudes that followed our SAVIOUR, were in general such. This, in my Judgement, is a very good Argument to convince any Man that this Work is of GOD. *I thank thee, O Father, says our Saviour, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because Thou hast hid these Things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes.* Matt. 11. 25. *I say unto You, that the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before You.* Chap. 21. 31, 32. Read 1 Cor. 1 Chap. from Verse the 19th.

— *Babbling their Nonsense in almost every obscure Corner, and diligently shunning the Company of Men of Learning and Knowledge, &c.*

This is a notorious Lye,— For they preach in the most noted and populous Cities, Towns and Villages, as well as other Parts of the Kindom, and before Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Scholars, and Commons of all Sorts, without Reserve or Fear. — Which way then can they undergo mighty (or any) Scandal or Disgrace by their not daring to face a learned Audience I see not. Nor is their preaching in *Streets or Fields* to be blamed; since this was the Practice of our SAVIOUR, as in the Mount, and of his Apostles; and since He also commands them and all their Successors to go out into the *Streets and Lanes of Cities, and into the Highways and Hedges of the Country.* Luke 14. 21, 23. Thus much upon his Introduction. By this Time I began to find, that I had but small Hopes of having my Scruples satisfied by reading the *Methodist dissected*. However I proceeded accord-

ing to His Advice carefully to examine the *Errors* He has charged upon them in the following Pages.

ERROR 1st.

The first Error may be this, false Notions concerning Faith, and unnecessary Divisions of it. The Faith which they contend for is a confident Belief, that C H R I S T will save them without any Regard at all to their own Works, &c.

This Part of the Error, I suppose, is not fairly stated against the *Methodists*. They only believe and teach that J E S U S C H R I S T will justify or pardon, and put true penitent Sinners into a salvable State by Faith only, without any Regard at all to their Works, which is according to the Gospel, Mark 16, 16. Jo. 3. 14, 15. compared with Numb. 21. 8, 9. Rom. 4th Chap. compared with Gen. 15, 5, 6. Acts 13, 39. Ephes. 2. 8, 9. Our SAVIOUR'S Miracles are illustrious Indications of this Truth. Where 'tis observable that H I S usual Way with H I S Patients, previous to curing of them, was, *Hast thou Faith; According to your Faith be it unto You.* Matt. 9. 29. Ch. 21, 21. *Only believe,* Matt. 5. 36, *If thou canst believe, all Things are possible to Him that believeth.* Ch. 9, 23. and immediately upon believing they were healed.

— Some of them boldly declare that a Man's bad Works will save him as soon as his good.

The Gospel all along plainly tells me, that we are not justified by our good Works. Acts 13, 39. Ephes. 2. 8, 9. Rom. 3. 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, Ch. 51. Gal. 16, 21. Ch. 3. 10. And surely what cannot justify cannot save; What cannot merit Remission of Sins, cannot merit Salvation. If good Works therefore cannot justify or procure Remission of Sins, at the Hands of God, they are no better in this Respect than our wicked ones. And consequently the Assertion of the *Methodists* is true. That a Man's bad Works will justify Him or procure Him Remission of Sins as soon as his good ones.

— Faith in the New Testament is a plain Thing.

This Faith, which he makes so plain a Thing, is plain enough indeed, so plain that I must own all the Men in England have it from their Cradles. For indeed, all that he makes of it is an *Historical Faith*, or the *Articles of the Apostles Creed*, which are collected out of the *New Testament*, He will have to be the sole, true Christian Faith, adding thereto a virtuous Life. This, I confess, was long my Notion of true Faith, and I fear the Generality are still in the same way of thinking. But I find this Faith

the

the Vicious have in common with the Virtuous, and is but the *Faith of Devils*, Jam. 2. And therefore tho' I grant that every Christian has and must have this Faith, yet true *Christian Faith* is quite another Thing. It implies a *new Nature thro' a new Birth*; a *Participation of God, or the Divine Nature*; an *inward feeling of CHRIST in us, being created New in HIM*; an *indwelling of the HOLY GHOST in us*; a *full and clear Sense of Pardon and Forgiveness of Sins*; an *Inheritor of Eternal Glory, and full Assurance of it in this Life*. 2 Cor. 5, 17. Ephes. 4, 16. Col. 2, 19. Jo. 1, 13. Ch. 15, 5. Rom. 5, 12. Ch. 8, 15. Tit. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 2 Pet. 1, 1, 4. Heb. 2, 11. Gal. 2, 20. John 6, 56. Ch. 15, 4. Col. 1, 27. Heb. 2, 14. Heb. 3, 14. 1 John 5, 11, 12. Ephes. 3, 19. Ch. 5, 13. Acts 20, 32. Ch. 26, 18. Ephes. 1, 11, 19. There are hundreds of Texts more to confirm these Truths;—indeed 'tis evidently the Scope of the whole Gospel. These References, however, afford sufficient Proof to me, that the Faith the *Methodists* maintain is the only true *Christian Faith*. This Faith none brings into the World with him, as every one does that, which the *Author of the Methodist dissent* relates, but it is the Gift of God Ep. 2, 8,

I find that though a Man may with an *Historical Faith* live a good Life, yet that Life is only annex'd to and doth not spring from such Faith. 'Tis like a *Kentish Pippin* stuck to a *Crabtree Branch*. But the true Christian justifying, saving, supernatural, Divine Faith, as it is necessarily attended with the aforesaid Virtues and Excellencies, so it *works by Love*, Gal. 5, 6, 22, 23, 24, 25. and good Works, Ephes. 2, 10. Tit. 2, 11, 12. What the *Author* says of Faith or strong Confidence being joined, or rather (as He should have said, and would have said, if He would either impartially examine the New Testament; or without Prejudice hear the *Methodists* preach), producing *Self Examination, Charity, and suitable Practice*. This, I must likewise affirm their Lives and Doctrines are a standing publick Proof of. Let *Pletcher* disprove it if he can,

ERROR 2d.

A second Error of the Methodists is their Antipathy to Learning and Study, some of them argue against it as if it was hurtful to Divinity.

I do not find any such Aversion to Learning and Study. They earnestly exhort Men to read and search and converse with the *Holy Scriptures* continually; affirming only that *humane Literature* is not indispensibly necessary for the understanding and preaching

preaching the Gospel. And this is so far from being an Error, that we find the Apostles *ignorant* and *unlearn'd Men*. St. Paul the Chief, if not the only *Scholar* amongst them, counted his Learning of no Worth, Phil. 3. 8. and testifies that the only Learning as to Divinity is not of Man but of the HOLY SPIRIT, 1 Cor. 1. 2 Chapters.

The Author of the *Methodist dissected* is offended that Men educated for and regularly brought up to the Ministry should encourage *unlearned Teachers*. But did not the HOLY GHOST encourage and send forth such too? And who art thou, O Man, that in thus objecting, objectest against GOD?

— It is evident, says he, both from Reason and the Holy Scriptures, that God loves his Creatures more or less, as they more or less resemble HIS Perfections, whereof infinite Knowledge is one.

What wretched Stuff is here! In the first Place I wonder what Part of Holy Scripture we learn this from, I can no where find it. And it is so far from being evident from Reason, that this will tell us, that if this Assertion be true, then the poor Man, whose Poverty incapacitates him to get Learning, must be most hated by GOD; and of such we may say, as the Priests and Pharisees did of our LORD's Disciples, *These Men who know not the Law are accursed*, John 7, 49. And the contrary appears in the Holy Scripture, Matt. 11. 25, 26. 1 Cor. 1. 19, 28.

— The wise Preacher directs his Son to get Wisdom and Understanding.

But what Wisdom and Understanding does the wise Man mean? Let him be his own Expounder. *The Fear of the LORD is the Beginning of Knowledge*, Prov. 1, 7. The same says his Father, Ps. 111, 10. And long before either of them, JOB — *Behold the Fear of the LORD that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding*, Ch, 28, 28. This the Methodists also contend for.

— The Disciples of CHRIST, tho' at first plain Fishermen, yet they had the Benefit of CHRIST's Instruction; and after the Resurrection of their LORD, they were not allowed to preach till endow'd with Power from above; a Power which our Methodists can never prove themselves to have.

If he means a Power to work Miracles; this the Methodists pretend not to: But if a Power to understand, expound, and preach the Gospel, this they maintain themselves to have; and declare, that tho' they have not CHRIST with them in the *Flesh*, yet

yet they have HIM in Spirit. And this I find is agreeable to the Word. Matt. 28, 20. John 14, 26. Ch. 16, 13. Ch. 6, 47. Acts 7, 8. 1 Cor. 2, 10, 13. Heb 8, 11, 12

— *St. Paul exhorts Timothy to Reading and Study.*

But of what, save only the Holy Scriptures 1 Tim. 4, 13, 15. 2 Tim. 3, 14, 17. This the *Methodists* do exhort all their Hearers to, as I have often taken Notice. Let any one enquire into this Matter; yea, let them examine into those that are their Teachers, if they please, without *Partiality* and *Prejudice*, and I question not, but He will find them well acquainted with the sacred Books.

ERROR 3d.

— *They generally, Pharisee like, condemn all but themselves; Some of them have been so unmannerly as to affirm, that those that preach any other Doctrine than they do, are Preachers of the Devil. This shews their Pride, as well as Uncharitableness.*

This, at first View, may seem a very harsh Assertion of the *Methodists*; But yet what can any Man object against it, who impartially and carefully compares, as I have done, their Doctrines and Principles with the Gospel. There is but *one Way, Truth and Life, that is CHRIST*, John 14, 6. There is but *one LORD, one Faith, one Baptism*, Ephes. 4, 5. *I determined not to know any Thing among You, save JESUS CHRIST and Him crucified*, 1 Cor. 2, 2. Those that differ from it are of their Father the Devil, John 8, 44. By Consequence, 'tis no proud, uncharitable Assertion to affirm, that those who preach different, are *Preachers of the Devil*. St. Paul in Effect says the same, — *Tho' We, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel to You, than that which we have preached unto You, let him be accursed.* Yea, He repeats the Words; *As we said before, so I say now again, if any Man preach any other Gospel unto You, than that Ye have received, let him be accursed*, Gal. 1, 8, 9. Much to the same Purpose is Rev. 22, 18, 19. Therefore I see not which way this Assertion of theirs should favour any more of Pride and Uncharitableness in them than in St. Paul himself.

— *Perhaps they will recoil and say, "Are not You to be numbered among the Proud, that think to be justified by Your own Righteousness?"*

Is not the Retortion just? Universal Observation, yea, If it may be admitted, my own Experience confirms it. Pride, I know, and expectation of Justification from our own Righteousness are inseparable. Does not St. Paul declare the same? 1 Tim. 6, 3, 4.

Afterwards

Afterwards says He, — *I know of no Sect or Party of Men in England that doth pretend to merit by their Works. Yet since GOD requires them, we cannot be justified without them.*

Here is a manifest Contradiction and a palpable Lye. A manifest Contradiction; No Sect or Party of Men in England, that He knows of, pretend to Merit by their Works; yet they must be wrought as indispensibly necessary for Justification;— surely they are Meritorious of Justification then? But shou'd He reply No; they are only Conditions of it. I answer, It will be no easy Matter to make a satisfactory Distinction between Condition and Merit in this Point. And his Words imply, that good Works *merit not* and yet they *they merit*.

Here is a palpable Lye also;— God no where requires good Works in order to Justification; or in other Words, God's requiring them is no Reason why we cannot be justified without them. I trust I have searched the New Testament as accurately as *Fletcher* has done, and am so far from meeting with one Word in His Favour, that I every where meet expressly with the Contrary. I shall only instance the few Places following, Rom. 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th Chapters; Ch. 10, 3. Gal. 2, 21. Ch. 3, 10. Tit. 3, 4, 5, 6.

ERROR 4th.

They pretend to live without Sin after they are made New Creatures.—Though this be not the idle Conceit of all that are called METHODISTS, yet many of them have pretended to it.

'Tis true all that are called METHODISTS pretend not to this — And those, that do, have no bad Grounds for it in the New Testament—If they are *New Creatures*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. *created in CHRIST JESUS*, Ephes. 2. 10. they are required to renounce *iniquity and Worldly lusts*, and to live *Soberly, Righteously and Godly, in this present World*, 2 Tit. 2. 12. *to overcome the World*. Rom. 12. 2. 1 Jo. 2. 15. Ch. 5. 4. 5. *The flesh*. Rom. 8. 13. Col. 3. 5. *The Devil*. 1 Jo. 5. 18. Ephes. 4. 7. Ch. 6. 11. Jam. 4. 7.—*To be Holy as God is Holy*. 1 Pet. 1. 15. 16.—*And perfect, as their FATHER in Heaven is perfect*, Matt. 5. 48 — All this is commanded by GOD, which if it were impracticable by the *Regenerate*, he would never have enjoyed them, — Some Men, I know, endeavour to evade, or mollify the Sense of these Scriptures, making them to signify no more than merely to forsake all habitual Vice and wickedness — But the Words are plain and positive.—Let such graceless Interpreters of GOD's Word, beware lest they
wrest

wrest it to their own Destruction.—The LORD hath spoken it, and who shall gain say, or reverse it?—

And as the *New Creatures in CHRIST JESUS* (or Christians) are thus commanded; So GOD, WHO does not require the *Tale of Bricks without Straw*, or to reap where he HE never sows gives Light and Strength by HIS HOLY SPIRIT to perform it,—Yea FATHER, SON and HOLY GHOST dwell in every regenerated Person, Jo. 1. 14. 23. 1 Cor. 6. 19.—*Their Sufficiency is of GOD, and they can do all things through the Strength of CHRIST*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. Phil. 4. 13. *for CHRIST WHO is in them, is greater than He that is in the World*, 1 Jo. 1. 44. Ch. 3. 6. 9. Ephes. 4. 13.—This is what the METHODISTS teach—And whoever will be at the Pains to reflect duly upon the Nature of Regeneration, and to examine the Holy Pages of the *New Testament* carefully and without Partiality, will find this Doctrine true.

The Word of GOD inform us, there is not a just Man upon Earth, no, not one; and if any Man say, He hath no sin, He deceiveth Himself; and the Truth is not in Him.

These Quotations, as I think, are no sufficient Confutation of this Doctrine, as they may either be understood, as spoken by the Apostle, of a natural Man or if He will of a Regenerate.—The METHODISTS deny not, but such through Unfaithfulness and Unwatchfulness may offend.—But this, and not the Want of Power, to live without sin, is the real Occasion of it.

— *An humble Christian will sometimes find vain Thoughts to lodge within Him, although He endeavour to keep his Heart with all Dilligence.—He may sometimes through Temptation or Surprise turn unto vanity, although He resolve to watch over His Ways, &c.*

Although this be granted it makes nothing against the Possibility of living without sin; for Temptations, whether of flesh, world or devil, (and of the first Sort are evil thoughts) are no sins, if we resist them; Temptations are Illurements to sins, but not sin themselves, creating guilt except the Will of the Regenerate consent thereto. Rom. 7. 17. 20. Jam. 1. 14.

ERROR 5th.

They affirm, that no Man can perform any good or acceptable Action until He be in CHRIST or a New Creature.

This Error is charged upon the METHODISTS in ambiguous Terms—Whether He means Actions good and acceptable in themselves, or before GOD, or with Respect to the End aim'd at

at by them, we cannot certainly guess—But which Way soever He means, I see no difficulty at all in conceding to this Assertion of the METHODISTS as true—In themselves all such good Actions as are done before Men are *in CHRIST* or *New Creatures* are bad—Let the Author of the *Methodist dissuaded*, remember his own Quotation in Proof for it, *There is none that doth good, no not One*, P. 1. 14. 3. —Read, Rom. 15. 23. Before God they cannot justify, as the whole New-Testament declares, See, Lu. 17. 10. Rom. 3. 19. 20. —We are not able to perform Works of *Congruity*, and much less Works of *Condiginity*—I wish this honest Fellow with the Generality of our *Modern Church-Men* and *Dissenters* be not inclined to turn Papists.

The METHODISTS so far as I can hear, press in their preaching all *Relative Duties*, and *moral Goodness*, being *lively Examples* thereof themselves; Yea, even in a Natural Man, or one not yet *in CHRIST*, they are so far from exploding such Actions, that they allow them to be useful and profitable, and therefore so far withal acceptable to God, as that he will either Reward them in this Life, or mitigate their Torments in the other. Thus he did, even by *Ahab* and *Jehu*; thus he did by divers others in the *Old Testament*, and thus may we suppose, he did by the *Pharisees* in the *New*, particularly, for their *Alms-giving*, *Prayer* and *Fasting*.—*Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward.* Mark, 5th Ch. But as to justifying, sanctifying and saving such those Works are altogether unexceptable to God, Matt. 5. 20. Rom. 20. 3.

ERROR 6th.

They affirm that good and bad Works are alike, and unprofitable in the Affair of Justification and Salvation.

Here is such a Confusion of Terms or Ideas, I know not whether, that 'tis hard to know, what he means—Good Works I again aver and 'tis as aforesaid, the main Scope of the Gospel to teach it, are no more concerned in the Matter of Justification than our bad ones; but by all the METHODISTS I've either heard or conversed, with they are maintain'd to be indispensibly necessary in that of Sanctification, and Salvation.—Yea and I will venture to add, what, I believe, they attempt not to deny, but will readily concede to, that if a Man simply and sincerely lives a good Life, as not knowing any other Way of being justified, and accepted before God, though such a Man's good Life merit nothing at all of HIM, yet God will sooner or later, look mercifully

cifully upon him, and convince, convert and save him.—This seems to be the Case of *Cornelius*, Acts, 10th Ch. *Lydia* Ch. 16, &c.

I wonder what Ideas these Men have of the Self Existent and Independent Being, who can imagine that HE will justify any wicked Man as such : But to take away all Disputes of this Nature HE hath declar'd in the sacred Oracles, His Royal Determination to reward the Good and punish the Wicked—To confirm this Assertion with He produces, Pl. 7. 11. Pl. 9. 17. Pl. 11. 6. Pl. 4. 3. Matt. 5. 8. Ch. 25. 46.

These Texts, as I take it, will not answer the Intent of the Author of the *Methodist dissected*, which, He wou'd have to prove, that God condemns the Wicked, and acquits and justifies the Righteous, both in this Life, and at the Day of Judgment, according to their righteous or unrighteous Living.—The plain meaning of this Man is, that God will save a Natural Man, (which He might as well affirm of a Turk or a Heathen, for they are the same) if he do well, or destroy, if he do ill.—Now if this be true, then God does not save or damn Men, as they are found justified or unjustified through CHRIST, but as they have spent their Lives.—This also must contradict the whole New Testament.—We are all over that blessed Book taught that Men are justified or not justified, only as they believe or believe not, *in CHRIST JESUS*.—And therefore those Texts which He quotes to such an unorthodox Purpose, must be understood in another Sense that is, in such a One, as better tallies and comports with the Main Design of the Gospel, which is to set forth *Justification by Faith only*. And that is reasonably this, that GOD OUR SAVIOUR, WHO is the Righteous Judge of Quick and Dead, will punish the wicked, that is, all such as have either persisted in sin and Wickedness, or confided in their own Goodness all their Days, according to their Works ; or Reward the Righteous, that is, all those, who being already justified though the *Righteousness and Blood Shedding of CHRIST only by Faith*, persevere in all Holiness of Heart and Life to the End, according to their Holiness.—This seems to be the familiar Sense of these and other Passages of Holy Scriptures of the like Sort. And if so, then the METHODISTS are not guilty of an Error at all, in affirming that the Good and bad Works (of a Natural Man he ought to have added) or more properly that the good Works of a natural or Unregenerated Man are as useless and unprofitable, as his bad Ones, as afore shewn in the Affairs of Justification and Salvation.—Neither is the Essential Difference between good and

evil

vil, Virtue and Vice hereby confounded ; nor are the *Attributes* of God in any wise hereby thwarted with.

E R R O R 7th.

They are generally against Morality, and commonly call Preachers of Morality, legal Preachers.——And to shew how Erronious the METHODISTS are in both these Respects HE proceeds——*Morality is very earnestly recommended almost in every Part of the New Testament.*

I never heard these Men exclaiming against *Morality* but in the Matter as aforesaid, of *Justification* :——Nor do they call such as preach it, *Legal-Preachers*, except they preach it for *Justification before GOD*——All that do so, if the Gospel be true, are *Legal Preachers*.

Very much Morality, continues He, is contain'd in CHRIST's excellent Sermon on the Mount.

So there is——But tis for the Use of such, as those *Blessed*, in the beginning of that Sermon, Mat. 5. Ch.

——*And a Multitude of the Instructions and Exhortations recorded in the Evangelists is to the Performance of the Duties of Morality.*——

But still, let him Instance where he will therein, will it appear, that our LORD intended such Precepts and Injunctions for the Use of *HIS Church*, or which is all one, the *Justified* and *Regenerate*.
But

When one desired to know what He must do to be saved, Our LORD directs Him to the Observation of the Moral Part of the Law.

So HE did——But, not to justify the *Lawyer* with, for by so doing, he must have subverted the very End of his coming into the World ; but on the contrary, as is evident from the Tenure of the whole Discourse. Lu. 10th Ch. HIS Design was to convince Him of the Impossibility of being justified by the Law——in such a Manner ought every Minister of CHRIST to preach the Law to the *carnal* and *unregenerate*, for their Conversion.——The only Use of the Law to the natural and unregenerate being to condemn, 2 Cor. 3. 9—to curse, Deut. 27. 26.—Gal. 3. 10.—and to kill and slay, Rom. 7. 9. 10. 11.——And to preach the Law in this Manner to such is properly enough to preach CHRIST——For by this preaching they are convinced that Righteousness for the Remission of sins and eternal Life, is not by the Law ; but Condemnation, the Wrath of God, and Hell, and that they therefore must fly to the Righteousness of another,

even CHRIST for these Mercies——Whoever preaches the Law, as I, though but lately, am fully convinced, otherwise to the unregenerate, be He *Church Man*, *Presbyterian* or what He will, He is a *preacher*, as aforesaid of the *Devil*, deserving in the Judgment of St. Paul to be accursed, Gal. 1. 8. 9.

And the Apostles in all the Epistles treat on the Duties of Morality.

So they do——They constantly and zealously urge them, but tis only to the *Regenerate*, to the *Justified* and *Saints* in CHRIST JESUS, as is evident from the Fronts of their Epistles——Other Men have no more to do with those Duties, then one Man has to do with the Contents of a Letter inscribed to another,——These very Duties will promote the Edification and Salvation of the *Regenerate*; but the Damnation of *others*——Taking the Epistles by the wrong End, and making themselves, if I may so speak, *Saints* out of *Duties*, instead of dutiful out of *Saints*, it is very much to be fear'd, has ruin'd thousands——Let us first become such as they to whom the Apostles wrote their Epistles, and then but not before, will their Duties of *Morality* belong to us.

ERROR 8th

Another of their Errors is their Doctrine of Assurance.——Many of them pretend to be in CHRIST, and are as *jure* of Heaven as if they were there already.——This Doctrine is plainly ill grounded.

Though I acknowledge myself to know at present, as little of my Peace with GOD and Hope or Assurance of Salvation, as this Author may seem to do; yet rather than boldly charge this, as an Error, upon the METHODISTS, I will follow his Advice, as I have hitherto done, and consult my *New Testament*——Perhaps He may deny it, and I not comprehend it for no better Reason, but because we neither know it for ourselves, nor have duly examined the Word of GOD about it.——This therefore shall inform me.——I find this Doctrine typified in all Our SAVIOUR'S Miracles.——His Patients were not only presently, but perfectly heal'd and healthful——'Tis clearly taught, as in almost numberless Passages, particularly in the following, Jo. 3. 16. 36.—Ch. 4. 14.—Ch. 6. 47.—2 Cor. 3. 1. 2. 5. 8.—Ch. 1. 21. 22.—Ephes. 1. 13.—Ch. 4. 30.—Col. 2. 2.—Heb. 6. 11.—Ch. 10. 21. 22.—Ch. 11th.—Ch. 12, 1. 2. Now if the *Methodists* contend for no other Assurance, than what we may learn from these Portions of Scripture, as I believe they do not, I cannot see why they are to be blamed;——But am rather moved my

by this Inquiry both to believe, and desire, this Assurance
 of myself.

What follows in this Paragraph is such an Hodge Podge of
something and nothing, of truth and untruth and so impertinent
 to the confuting of this pretended *Error*, that it deserves no fur-
 ther Notice—Afterwards He proceeds, poor Fellow, in the fol-
 lowing Manner.

*We are frequently exhorted in St. Paul's Epistles, to press for-
 ward, to strive, to wrestle, to run, to fight and to fear, seeing
 Promise is left of entering into Rest, lest any should fall short.*

I have according to my poor Abilities examined, Phil. 3. 14.
 1 Cor. 9. 25.—Luk. 13. 24.—Ephes. 6. 24.—Heb. 12.
 1 Tim. 6. 12.—1 Cor. 9. 26,—where all these *Metap-
 horical and Agonistical Terms* are used—And every where find
 that they are Exhortations to the *Regenerate or Christian* only,
 to be faithful and diligent in their *Holy Calling and Vocation*.—

And there are these following Reasons discoverable from the
 Gospel for it—1st.—That the Title to eternal Glory is an-

nexed to Justification—Lu. 23. 43—Rom. 5. 1. 2. that
 with, by which they are justified, discovering their Title to
 them, John, 3. 36.—Ch. 6. 47.—1 Cor. 1. 30.—Col. 22.

Man—2dly.—that there are Degrees of Glory, Jo. 14. 2.

Heaven—Cor. 15. 41. 42.—3dly.—That the Regenerate accord-

ingly to their different Degrees of Grace and Holiness shall attain
 different Degrees of Glory and Happiness.—Matt. 25. Ch.

little of Cor. 3. 8—2. Cor. 5. 10. Rev. 20. 12. 13.—Yea,

as this not only so but different Abilities and *Talents* of Grace, to

his, as mark out the great Salvation with, Luk. 19. Ch. —4thly.—

vice, as that notwithstanding their Title to Glory, the different Degrees

Perhaps it to be attained to, and their several Abilities for that very

Reason propose; yet they are too apt to be remiss, careless and un-

duly exacting in their Duty —5thly.—That this as it is never

re shall, so may it be very dangerous, they may depart or fall so

from Grace received, as to *Shipwreck Faith* and become

perfectly *states*, it is to be feared, like those 1 Tim. 1. 19. and be

numbered thereby involved in those dreadful Circumstances of those Men,

5.—Ch. 6. 45. 6. Ch. 10. 25—18—2 Peter, 2. 21. 22.—

21. 22. these Reasons amongst others it was needful for the Apostle

1.—Ch. press the Churches He wrote to by such Arguments and Allu-

Metaphors, as those several *Metaphors* suggest.

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E R R O R 9th.

Another of their Errors is their false Pretensions to Inspiration,

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inspired

inspired Men which we read of in the Holy Scriptures always shew'd some Miracles to confirm their Doctrines, &c.

Did those of the *dispersed by the Persecution against the Church at Jerusalem*, work Miracles, when they went every where, and the *Apostles* tell us *preaching the Word*? *Acts* 8. 1. 4.—Does it appear that *St. Paul* wrought Miracles where ever he preached the Gospel?—Is it any where said in the New-Testament that a Man ought not to pretend to Divine Inspiration, unless he work Miracles?—Or that any Man can, or may preach the Gospel without Inspiration?—Such Assertions and Prohibitions I have no where met with from either our *LORD* or *HIS Apostles*.—But for one Proof to the contrary, which shall at this Time suffice read the *two first Chapters of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians*.—Tis also observable that in all the Reformed Churches, that I know off; especially formerly, what ever it was, no one was to be admitted to preach without a Declaration that he was thus qualified.

If they be inspired, as they pretend, their Discourses must bear equal Authority with the Holy Scriptures, &c.

The consequence is too bulky for the Premises—Though I as yet am scarce a *Semi-Methodist*; can by no means away with this egregious Nonsense.—I believe *Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Huss, Jerom of Prague, Wickliff, &c.* were inspired Divines in the fullest Sense that the *Methodists* pretend to, and yet neither they, nor any one of them, ever thought of setting their Writings upon the same Authority with the Holy Scriptures.

They might be expected, says he, to speak better than the most eloquent Orator, or most Learned Philosopher in the World, &c.

That this shou'd be a Consequence of their Pretence to Inspiration, I am perswaded, will not be easily proved from the New-Testament—I have carefully searched, but cannot find so.—It is no where the Case of the *Apostles*.—For although they speak, as the *SPIRIT* gave them Utterance, yet they seem to use their own Stile.—*St. Paul* expressly says, that they and particularly Himself, who had both the Advantage of Education and Inspiration, used plainness of Speech, *1 Cor.* 1. 17. *Ch.* 2. 6. 7. 8.—Their own Mother Tongue in all Probability, and rustick Idiom, as appears from the Offence their Speech or Manner of Speaking gave the *Sage Philosophers and Orators of His Day*, *Ch.* 1. 21. 24.—*St. Matthew's* Style is very mean, and I suppose, He spoke no finer Language than he wrote.—What then shou'd more be expected from the *Methodists-preachers* than the *Apostles*, in thus pretending to Inspiration?

But let me add, as a farther Answer to this Error, something of my own Observation—*St. Paul* says, that *his Speech and his preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom; but in Demonstration of the SPIRIT and of Power*—And he gives this plain Reason for it, *that the Faith of the Corinthians shou'd not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of GOD*, 1 Cor. 2. 4. 5.—Plainness and Powerfulness of Speech therefore we see in the preaching of the Gospel comport together.—And of these Men also I have often observed that tho' they speak plainly, yet they speak *powerfully*.—When I went first to hear them with my Neighbour, it was no small Surprize to me to hear the *Preacher*, who was acknowledged to be a Man of no Literature, Argumentation or Eloquence, speak so articulately, convincingly and moving, as if he had been one of the ingeneoustest Artists at raising the Passions—My Admiration was something like that of the *Jews* concerning CHRIST—*How knoweth this Man Letters having never Learn'd?* Jo. 17. 15. He teaches, thought I, as *he did as a Man having Authority, and not as the Scribes*, Matt 7. 29.—Had *he* had Learning suitable to such Abilities, I shou'd not have wonder'd—I have heard several others since and 'tis much the same with them all. So that I think, and speak others what evil they please of it, the more I reflect upon it, the more I'm convinced their *Wisdom is from above, that they are taught of GOD*, 1 Jo. 6. 45. that this is *HIS* Work, and that the *LORD* is with them of a Deed and a Truth I may say in some Sense, like *Annas the High Priest, Caiaphas, John and Alexander*, but, I trust, to better purpose, observing the *Boldness of these Men, as they did of Peter and John, that they are unlearn'd and ignorant Men* indeed, and must therefore, as well as those, *have been with JESUS*, Acts, 4. 6. 13.—And for full Satisfaction about it repair'd to my Bible, Joel, 2. 28. 29. particularly my New-Testament, Matt. 11. 25. Joh. 6. 45. 1 Cor. 1. 19. 20. 26. 27.

If the Word of GOD contain the whole Will of GOD, they ought to speak agreeable thereto.—But it is plain they contradict both Reason and the Holy Scriptures; therefore they cannot be inspired by the SPIRIT of GOD.

Such a Clause I am told by *Longinus*, is called a *Syllogism*, and that the first Sentence is call'd the greater, the second the lesser, Proposition, and the third the Consequence.—Whether the *Orator* Author know any more of *Logick*, than I do, or intend this for a *Syllogism*, I know not; but this I know,, that admitting it to be one

be one, I have fully proved the *lesser Proposition* to be a *Lye*, and therefore in Course the *Consequence* must be so too.

I wonder (continues HE) that they are not affraid of being struck down Dead, like Ananias and Sapphira for lying against the HOLY GHOST, and their own Conscience.

So shall I wonder too, when the Author proves them to do so. 'Tell then I cannot but entertain two as great Wonders; the one is that, how the Author can imagine that 'tis consistant with the Wisdom and Goodness of GOD to inspire these Men by *HIS HOLY SPIRIT* to preach the Gospel, and then knock them down dead for it; and the other is, that he is not much rather convinced, that they are inspired for this Purpose, since no such Judgment has ever hitherto befallen them, and that HE is not therefore grievously ashamed of HIMSELF for charging them herein with an Error.

ERROR 10th.

They affirm the New Birth, as well as Justification by CHRIST to be Instantaneous, when it is plain to any one that consulteth himself, that it is Gradual. There are several Steps or Gradations in the New Birth, that one that is born again cannot be ignorant of.

This Man, I perceive, would have the World believe, that He is born again. He talks of *Steps* and *Gradations* in the *New Birth*. But such a Piece of incoherent, unintelligible, wild Stuff, He makes of it, as not only proves Himself to be altogether ignorant of the Matter, but which the *Forefathers, Elders, and Presbyters* of His own Church in the last Century would have abhor'd the very Sight of. How would that Reverend and worthy *Assembly of Divines*, who composed His *Excellent Catechism*, had they been living, have been ashamed of such a *spurious Son* as this! Yea, and I may truly add, of Numbers more of their degenerate Posterity, both Teachers and Hearers.

A Man, says He, *that has accustomed Himself to Sin a long Time*, (instancing in an habitual Drunkard or Debauchee) *bath thereby contracted such evil and strong Habits, as cannot be routed out in an Instant, &c.* The first Step, He thinks (though this in His Favour must be owned, He thinks so, He is not certain, but only guesses) is *serious Consideration*. And in this Step He wisely includes Reflections upon *impaired Health, embezzled Estate and a lost Reputation*.

'Tis possible GOD may make use of these Reflections to open such a Sinner's Eyes; but 'tis strange to see the main Stress of Consideration

Consideration upon these Reflections, and not much more upon the exceeding Sinfulness of Sin wrought in Him by the Law, Rom. 7, 13.—the Wrath of God, and eternal Judgement, and withal the Impossibility of obtaining GOD's Mercy, and eternal Glory, by Man's uprightest Obedience to the Law, any more than by his prophaneft Disobedience thereto; as also the damnable Nature of every Heart-Sin.

—The second Step in the New Birth is to enquire, as it is natural, whether there be any Remedy for Him; which, by reading the Gospel, He may find is to repent and forsake His Sin, and then he shall find Mercy.

—The next Gradation is to fall on Tooth and Nail, —to take Himself to Task and try to conquer His base Habits, 'till He has conquer'd them or Himself——and then He is born again.—But this, says He, (and indeed He says truly) must require a considerable Time.

I'll endeavour to illustrate this Account of the Operation of the New Birth by a very familiar Simile drawn from the Natural. It is as if We were to suppose, A Man must be begotten, then conceived, and formed in the Womb; then He must have Life and Motion; then He must be born; then suck, then walk, become a Scripling, a Youngman, arrive at Maturity, ripe in Understanding and Judgement, and able to perform all Manly Exercises, and then He is born, but not before. All serious and true Christians may be appealed to, whether His Account of the New Birth, be not equally as ridiculous as this of the Natural,—neither do we meet with any Thing at all like it in the New Testament.

The following strange Inferences are obviously deducible from His Relation of the New Birth. 1st That there is no Need, and therefore no Mention made of the Blood and Righteousness of CHRIST in our New Birth. 2dly, No Need, and therefore no Mention, of Faith, instrumentally, or otherwise, in it. 3dly, No Need of the HOLY GHOST, and therefore no mention thereof in it. All which three Things are chiefly, if not solely concerned in it, as it is evident all through the New Testament. As John 1, 13. Ch. 3, 5, 8. Rom. 1, 5, Ch. 3, 25. Rom. 5, 9. 2 Cor. 5, 17. Ephes. 2, 10. 1 Pet. 1, 19, 23. 1 John 5, 18. 4thly, That a Man's New Birth is in His own Power, and of His own Working. 5thly. That it only consists in turning from an evil to a virtuous Life. 6thly, That none but wicked Men stand in Need of this New Birth. 7thly. That the Virtuous from their Youth up, always were born again: 8thly, That there is no original Sin to be charged on us, and to be delivered from

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from the Punishment of through CHRIST, or otherwise. 9thly and lastly, That a Man is in the Pangs of the *New Birth* all the while He is labouring to overcome His habitual Corruptions, or Sins, tho' he go to His *Glasy* and His *Whore* many a Time in that long Season.

I think it may not be amiss in this Place to give the Reader the *Methodists* Account of the *New Birth*, who affirm, that it is not a gradual but an *instantaneous* Work. They say the whole Work is begun, carried on, and accomplished by CHRIST thro' HIS SPIRIT. And that Faith is the sole Instrument. But to be more particular. The Account please to take in the following Words. CHRIST first awakes a Sinner's Heart a little to see himself to be a Sinner, and that His Condition is damnable, either by hearing the Law preached, or the Conversation of others, or by Dreams, or some sort of Accident or surprizing Turn of Divine Providence; from this HE then gradually leads the Soul to deeper Reflection and Examination of itself, by which Means deeper and dreadfuller Discoveries of Sin and it's Dangers are made to the poor Wretch, till at length Sin becomes exceeding Sinful. And this is attended with many a galling Aggravation, which conduce greatly to the Encrease of Contrition of Heart, and Compunction of Spirit; at this Season fearful Apprehensions of GOD's Wrath, HIS Law's Curse, Satan's Power, and impending everlasting Damnation, terrify his guilty Conscience. He is brought to see, that there is no more Hope or Satisfaction in His good, than His wicked Works; a Thing which our modern *Churchmen* and *Dissenters* falsely call *Conversion* or *Christianity*. But far otherwise, the poor Convict is now brought, says the *Methodist*, to acknowledge with St. Paul, that the *Commandment, which was ordained unto Life, I find to be unto Death. For when the Commandment came* (that is, to be applied, as it now is, to my Conscience) *sin revived and I died—Rom. 7, 9, 10.*—This seems, methinks, to be the Case of the penitent *Publican* in the *Temple*, Luke 18th Ch. of the *Prodigal*, Luke 15th Ch. and of the 5000 Acts, Ch. 2d.—Such may We suppose and the *Methodists* teach, are meant by the *labouring and heavy laden*, to whom CHRIST calls to come to HIM and HE will give them Rest, Matt. 11, 28. All this is previous to the *New Birth* or *Admission* into a *Christian State*; and may be properly term'd the Pangs of it.

It may be here remark'd that in this Condition, tho' as yet, unborn again, He as cordially refrains from the Evil of his Ways, and as strictly adheres to all Manner of virtuous and holy Living.

as if He was either already a Christian, or expected Mercy thereby and everlasting Life, tho he be all the while Conscious of meriting Nothing by it. This solely proceeds from His present Dread of Wrath and Hell. He expects Nothing for his Obedience, and fears by adding Sin to Sin to *treasure up to Himself Wrath against the Day of Wrath*. His Holiness, if it may be called so, only proceeds from a slavish *Old Covenant Fear*. His Load of Guilt for Sin and Iniquity, notwithstanding such Holiness, grows daily more and more intollerable, till at last His Cry is *Lord save, or I perish*. Hitherto He is neither justified nor regenerated. He is almost, but not altogether, a Christian. His Hour of Redemption is near, but not fully come. Should He die in this Condition His Soul would perish. For until *He is actually born again, He cannot enter the Kingdom of GOD*, (be looked upon either, as in a State of Grace, or capable of eternal Glory) John 3, 3, 5. He is not under *Grace* yet, but under the *Law*; and therefore, says St. Paul, *under the Curse*. Gal. 3, 10.

In this desperate State the LORD JESUS, say they, reveals Himself to the poor Sinner, perswades Him to *believe*, that His Grace is sufficient for Him, that HIS *Blood* and *Righteousness* shall be imputed to Him, that His Sins thereupon and thereby shall be totally washed away, and he accounted Righteous before GOD, as if He had never sinn'd, and that *Righteousness of His Saviour* were His own. The same Instant He is justified, he is born again, and feels the Guilt of Sin vanish, and the Dread of GOD's Wrath, together with the Condemnation of his Law totally removed. Rom. 5. 1, 2. Chap. 8. 1. Matt. 11. 28. This is doubtless His *Hour of Redemption*, the blessed *Instant of His Justification* and *New Birth*, and it is *Instantaneous*. This is plainly typified in the miraculous Cures that JESUS CHRIST wrought. No sooner did the *Blind, the Lame, the Withered handed, the Leper, the Paraletick* apply to HIM in Faith, but with a *Touch* or *Word*, they were *instantly healed*. And so, say the *Methodists*, it is with HIS *Spiritual Patients*. In the Instant they by Faith apply to HIM, circumstanced as aforesaid, they are healed of all Soul Sickness, are pardoned of all their Sins, or, which is all one, are *justified*. In the same Moment, being justified, the poor Convict is also born again, and receives a Seed of Divine Life into His Soul, from CHRIST by the Operation of the HOLY GHOST. 1 John 3. 9. John 1. 12, 13, 16. Ch. 5. 24. Ephes. 2, 10. Ch. 5. 30. Heb. 2. 11. 2 Pet. 2, 4. compare with Heb. 2. 14. with Ch. 3. 14. There is

is from that blessed Instant forward as real an Union between CHRIST and the *New Creature*, or Believer, as there is between CHRIST and the FATHER. It is several Ways illustrated in the Gospel, As between a *Vine* and its *Branches*, John 1, 15. the *Head* and the *Members of the humane Body*, 1 Cor. 12. Ephes. 4. 15, 16. *The Foundation and Parts of the Superstructure of a Temple*, Chap. 3. 20, 21, 22. *The Matrimonial or Conjugal Union*, Chap. 5. 26, 27. 30, 32. All which *Allusions* manifestly discover, not a mere political, as many would have it, tho' this also must be allowed, but a real Union between CHRIST and *His Members*. And 'tis through this very Union only that they are made instantaneously, plainly and perpetually to experience, or feel, Sin pardoned, their Burden gone, Guilt vanished, Peace of GOD succeeding, and Joy in the HOLY GHOST following, Luke 17. 24. Rom. 14. 17. They then and therein receive a *new Understanding, Will, Judgement, Affections, Purposes, &c.* If any Man, says the Apostle, *be in Christ, He is a New Creature: Old Things are passed away, behold all Things are become New*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. There are Texts almost innumerable in the *New Testament* to confirm these Truths.

From the same Instant they receive the HOLY GHOST, for it is impossible for a Man to be in Union with CHRIST, or as St. Paul speaks, *to be Members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones*, Ephes. 1. 5. and not to have the HOLY GHOST in Him. If any Man have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST He is none of HIS, Rom. 8. 9. If the HOLY GHOST be in the Head, Man's Reason must convince Him that HE must be in the Members also. *The Love of GOD is shed abroad in the Hearts of the Regenerate by the HOLY GHOST which is given unto them*, Rom. 5. 5. *Because Sons of GOD in CHRIST*, they can thenceforth call GOD, ABBA, FATHER, Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 4. 6. As CHRIST did, Mark 14. 36. They are now Heirs, Rom. 8. 17. Tit. 3. 7. and rejoicing in the Hope of the Glory of GOD, Rom. 5. 2. Through the Light, Life, and Power of the HOLY GHOST that is in them, and whose Temples they are called, 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. Chap. 6. 19. 2 Cor. 6. 16. They gradually grow up in all Holiness of Heart, Lip and Life, which is called *Sanctification*. To them alone, be it observed, belong the Exhortatory Parts of the Epistles. They grow from *Faith to Faith*, Rom. 1. 17. From *Grace to Grace*, John 1, 16. from *Strength to Strength*, Ps. 84. 7. They have the like Periods, if I may so speak, in Spiritual, as there are in natural or humane, Life, and

and from the Infant of the *New Birth*, are first *Babes*, 1 Cor. 3, 1. 1 Peter 2, 2. then *little Children*, 1 John 2, 12. then *young Men* Verse 13th, and lastly *Fathers*, Verse 13. Thus I have given You the *Methodists* Account of the *New Birth*, its *Instantaneousness*, what Man is before it, what in it, and what after it, believing the whole to be, the more I search my *New Testament*, the more agreeable thereto.

In all this we may observe not a Word is said how this *Regeneration*, or *New Birth* is wrought; nor as far as I can find, do the *Methodists* pretend to understand it.——And although some Men have, and still may impertinently or simply, ask like *Nicodemus*, *how can these things be*.——Methinks 'tis not a wise Question.——To such may the *Methodists* answer in the Words of the *Wise Man*, on another Occasion——*Thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this*. Eccles. 7. 10.——No Man in my Judgment ought to doubt of, or deny, the Reality of the *New Birth*, because HE cannot comprehend how is it wrought.——This is no less ridiculous than it wou'd be to question the Reality of his own *Birth* because he is not able to know how HIS own *Bones* grew in the *Womb* of his *Mother*. Ch. 11. 5.——*Thou knowest not*, says the same Verse, *what is the Way of the SPIRIT*.——and so says our *LORD*, *the Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof; but canst not tell, whence it cometh and whither it goeth*, So, says HE, *is every One, that is born of the SPIRIT*. Jo. 3. 8. 'Tis a *Mystery*, Ephes. 5. 32. Col. 1. 27. But nevertheless it is a *Reality*.——'Tis enough, as I think therefore, for a *Regenerate Person* to be able to say, as the *Parents* of the *blind Man* did to the *Jews*, *we know, that this is our Son, and that HE was born blind, but by what means HE now seeth, We know not*; that we are born again, *this we know*, but how are we born again, *this We know not*, not do we desire it.

ERROR 11th.

Another Error is their permitting unlearned Men without Ordination to go about, preaching the Gospel.

Pray how did our *LORD* permit or send forth his *twelve Apostles* Matt. 10th. Lu. 9th. or the *Seventy*, Ch. 10th.——Was it with, or rather without Learning? Were they formally ordained by the Imposition of Hands, &c or where those so, Acts, 8th.——Or *St. Paul* in the three first Years of his *Apostleship*?——Or did any Person, that we can find, even object against any of them on this Account——I meet with no such Thing in all my
New

New Testament, and therefore can by no means look upon this, as an *Error* in the *Methodists*.

The Apostle Paul advertiseth Timothy of the Character that every Minister of the GHOSPEL should bear, 1 Tim. 3d. Ch. and also Tit.——

These Characters *the Methodist Preachers*, as is very obvious to every impartial, unprejudiced Man's Observation, more exactly imitate and live up too than the Generality of our *Clergy*, and the *Presbyterian Ministers*, who with Pity, but to their shame I am obliged to speak it, are basely defective herein——Let the Author of the *Methodist dissected*, or any other Person disprove it, if HE can.

——*They not only contradict the Precept of the most Eminent Apostle St. Paul; but bring the most noble Religion in the Word, and the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST into Contempt.*

How can this be charged upon such, as all the Nation do, or may know, if they will, are Patterns of that very Character, which the Apostle gives for every Minister of the Gospel to bear, I must confess I am at an utter Loss so much as to conceive.——Look about, you my Friend, and set the Saddle on the right Horse.

——*And are in Danger of running Church and State into Confusion,——*This is all of any Consequence that is said further under this 11th Error.——What a surmizing, malicious, seditious, Incendiary, may we see, is this. Many of our Country-Men, I must own, have malevolently surmised the same.——But what just, or even plausible Ground have the *Methodists* by their Doctrine and Conduct, hitherto given for such Insinuations or Dangers?——But alas! was it not exactly thus in our LORD's and HIS Apostles Days?——*If we let HIM thus alone, all Men will believe on HIM, and the Romans shall come, and take away our Place and Nation. Jo. 11. 48.——These are they, that turn the World upside down. Acts, 17. 6.——*And by whom the Craft is in Danger *Demetrius* fears it, and cries out, *Acts, 19 Ch*——But is not this a very good Proof or Vindication, that this *New Doctrine, Acts 17. 19. this new Way*, as the World at this Time calls it, is of God?

ERROR 12th.

Another Fault of the METHODISTS in their fiery Zeal without Knowledge.——

Sure it can be no real Fault to be zealous, in a good Cause, nor can any Cause be better, or more laudable, than that of preaching and professing the Gospel.——A Zeal for Gifts which
relates

relates to the former, 1 Cor. 14. 12. and *Zeal for Works of Grace*, or Evangelical Holiness, which respects the latter, Tit. 2. 14. if the Authority and Advice of an Apostle may be regarded, ought to be commendable among all Men.

Most of what is contain'd in this Error has been examined already, particularly under the last.—From the Language *he* here uses we may clearly discover, a malicious, wrathful Spirit, and much of *Sladdin's Disposition and Dialect*.—Insomuch that the *whole Paragraph* may be term'd an *Abstract* or *Epitomy* of his *late Libel* intitled, *A brief Description of the Methodists*. That *Pamphlet* I had once design'd to have answered; but as it is look'd upon by all serious People to be nothing, but a mere irrational, spiteful *Invective*, little in it, that is to the Purpose, and that little sufficiently answered, I hope in my Examination of this, I shall not think it worth my while, at present however, to take any further Notice of it.—Indeed if the Gospel be true, I cannot in my poor Judgment desern, what these two Fellows have done more by their appearing in Print, than discover'd to every true Christian, an ignorant, Graceless, Christless Condition in themselves, and in every one else, that applaud their Undertakings.—'Tis my Duty however to wish their Happiness here and forever hereafter, and the best Way, I know off, to do it, is pray that they with myself may be brought to know in this, the Day of their Visitation, the *Truth as it is in JESUS*, and to enjoy the Life and Power and Comfort of it in Our Hearts and Lives to the Everlasting Happiness and Consolation of our Souls.

E R R O R 13th.

Another is their Doctrine of absolute Election and Reprobation. though this may not be the Opinion of them all.—Yet many of them espouse it.——

I shall not concern myself much in Replying to this *supposed Error*—I leave it to these to do it, if they please, who espouse this Opinion.—All that I shall say of it is only this, that it may be as true as any in the *New Testament*, for ought this Author has said to disprove it.—I make no Scruple withal to affirm that one in that Way of thinking may easily refute all that He has said, and am well assured that many wiser and better Men of his own Communication have both embraced and maintain'd this Doctrine in such a Masterly Manner, as I fear he is far from being able to gain say or oppose.——

—Many more Errors might be named, says He. but these are most gross and sufficient to move any thinking Man to examine their Doctrine better, and compare it, with the Word of GOD. —

As these in his own Apprehension, are the grossest Errors of the *Methodists*, the many more, that, he says, might be named, I suppose, are less ones—And as these of the Grossest Sort, appear to me at least, upon a careful and impartial Examination of them by the *New Testament*, as the Author has desired, to be so far from being contrary to, as to be clearly and evidently well grounded upon those Holy Pages, I hope, I may take it for granted, that the lesser Sort, whatever they be, are either so too, or, if Errors, not chargeable upon the *Methodists* in any wise.

I pay, I trust, as weighty a Regard, as either the Author of the *Methodist* deſected, or any Man else, to the Holy Scriptures—I look upon them to be perfect Rule of Faith and Doctrine, and believe with our Church in her 6th Article. “That what “is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be “required of any Man, that it should be believed, as an Article “of the Faith, or be thought requisite and necessary to Sal- “vation.”—With this Belief, with a Willingness also to embrace, as I thought, the Author’s reasonable Advice, and with Prejudice enough to lay Hold of any Thing, which would justify the Explosion of *Methodism* and quiet my present Anxiety of Mind, I sat down and diligently compared his Errors with my *New Testament*—And if I was conscious of using Partiality on either Side, it was, I must own, and any one may easily imagine, rather on his Side.—But quite contrary to my Hope and Desire, my Examination of his Errors, &c. by the Gospel has not only compleatly removed all my Prepossessions and Prejudice against the *Methodists*, but entirely composed my uneasiness, and firmly, I hope, determined me to their Side—And am fully perswaded, that if Men, instead of listening to common Fame (which on other Occasions, we say, is a Lyar) and condemning this *New Way* as I, like others, use to do Hand over Head, wou’d but either hear it for themselves, or take *Fletcher’s* own Advice, “To try the Methodistical Doctrines by the New-Testament.”—I am fully perswaded, I say, if they would do so, Multitudes more would be obliged to esteem it the highest Prudence, and the surest Way to be happy in Our SAVIOUR while here and happy with HIM for ever hereafter to turn *Methodists*. —

I have

I have only one thing to say more, which I think, is of no small Importance to the Point in Hand ; and that is this——*Methodism*, we know, as to the Manner in which it is carried on, is lookt upon, as a Sort of *Schism*.——This is a Common Complaint, and Objection against it——I have therefore examined and compared it with the Homilies, 39 Articles, and Liturgy of our Church ; and not only so, but because the *Presbyterians* in general second our *Church-Men* in the same Reflection, I have likewise carefully compared it with the *Greater* and *Lesser Assemblies Catechism*, and upon the Issue have the Satisfaction and Pleasure to find that *Methodism* in Substance, is even literally, agreeable to both.——So that I, or any *Churchman*, tho' *Methodists*, may be *Churchmen* still, and the *Presbyterians*, tho' such may be *Presbyterians* still——Nay, I find, tis altogether impossible to be either until we are *Methodists*, and that that Person, whoever he be, or however dignified, or distinguish'd, that denies, or cavils at this, is himself neither *Churchman* or *Presbyterian*, but a base *Schismatick* from both——He can be no Christian in any wise, but I fear, a down right *Heresetick*.

To conclude—I must own myself extreamly obliged to Mr. *Fletcher* for his good Advice, and hope he will acknowledge my thankfulness to him, when he sees I have been so careful as to embrace it, I mean in trying the *Methodistical Doctrine by the New-Testament*——I hope also that he will have the Thanks of many more on the same Account ; and shall heartily endeavour and pray that he may.——I shall likewise compliment him, as a further Instance of my thankfulness, assuring him that all the *Methodists* around me will give their *Amen* to it, by closing up my *Examination* in his own exhortatory Words—Which are, “ That
 “ all Men, that read his Book wou'd read all Parts of the New
 “ Testament, and diligently study them, that they may know
 “ JESUS CHRIST and HIM Crucified, WHOM to know
 “ Life eternal.——And may that GOD, THAT is possessed
 “ of all possible Perfections send down his HIS HOLY SPI-
 “ RIT to help our Infirmities and guide us into all Truth thro'
 “ JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, Amen. Amen.

F I N I S.

June 17. 1783

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I have only one thing to say to you
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